

January 10, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

EMANCIPATION SERVICES/INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM QUARTERLY REPORT

On July 17, 2001, your Board instructed my office to oversee a number of activities related to improving the administration of the Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program (ES/ILP). We provided an initial report on our progress on September 26, 2001. This is to provide your Board with our first quarterly status report.

The following summarizes the activities conducted since our previous report with respect to strengthening the County's ES/ILP Program.

Interim Operational Agreement

An Interim Operational Agreement among nine County Departments (Chief Administrative Office, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Department of Health Services, Department of Mental Health (DMH), Probation, Department of Public Social Services, Department of Community and Senior Services, Community Development Commission (CDC), and Consumer Affairs) involved in the ES/ILP Program was signed and executed on October 23, 2001 (Attachment I). This Agreement lays out the purpose of the Agreement, problem definition, scope of work, fiscal process, implementation schedule and the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

Selection of the Interim Team

Dr. Sharon Watson was selected as Interim Team Leader and began work on a part-time basis on November 6, 2001. Her primary initial task has been the recruitment and selection of the Team members. To date, she has selected three of the five Team members. Each is highly qualified and brings unique skills to the Team. They are:

- Dilys Tosteson Garcia as the Interagency/Multi-Sector Liaison and Communication Expert. Ms. Garcia brings over 15 years of experience in communications and marketing to the Team. She has a B.A. from Yale University in Latin American Studies and an M.A. in Latin American History from Stanford University. Last spring, she was part of a collaborative DCFS/community partners effort funded by the Casey Family Program to develop a handbook on Program Services for eligible youth. In addition, she designed/implemented an outreach program for line staff, the Children's Court, and youth and their caretakers about the ILP program.
- Naomi Guth as the Housing Expert. Ms. Guth brings 14 years of experience working in various aspects of the affordable housing arena – developing and implementing housing policies and programs, managing the development of 218 affordable housing units for a nonprofit developer, conducting research on homelessness in the City and County of Los Angeles, and authoring five reports, including the "1996 Short-Term Housing Directory of Los Angeles County" and "Permanent Housing for the Homeless: A Study and Directory of Resources, Los Angeles County" (1999). She holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies from the University of California at Santa Cruz and a Masters in City Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Stephanie Carter as the Contract/Data/Tracking/Evaluation Expert. Ms. Carter brings 7 years of experience to the Team – first, as a social worker and then in program planning/development coordination, data analysis, research and program evaluation. She has also developed quantitative and qualitative program evaluation materials to evaluate the effectiveness of a school-based mental health program and student opinions about a graduate school social work program. She also has experience with data collection on key indicators for a child welfare program for the Los Angeles County Proposition 10 Commission. She holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in Psychology from Cal State Long Beach and an M.S.W. from USC.

Selection of the Program/Policy Development Expert is still pending. Every effort is being made to identify an acceptable candidate from within the County, specifically from either DCFS or Probation.

Selection of the Executive Assistant is also pending. A County employee has been identified and we are trying to work out a loan arrangement with her department.

I have made Kathy House of my staff available as the Budget Expert on the Interim Team, and Jacquelyn McCroskey, Professor of Social Work at USC, has been engaged to consult on a part-time basis regarding the Emancipation Program outcomes.

DCFS Emancipation Services (ES) Chief

The DCFS ES Chief will be a key participant in the activities of the Interim Team and will be responsible for the ongoing provision of top quality services. The examination process for this position has been completed and Susan Kerr of my office and Dr. Watson both participated on the interview panel that selected, from a group of four finalists, a recommended ES Chief. DCFS will submit a request to hire the ES Chief within the next two weeks. That recommendation will be forwarded to your Board for review.

Development of a Work Plan

Dr. Watson is currently preparing a draft work plan to achieve the tasks/goals outlined in the Interim Operational Agreement. To accomplish this task, she has created a Design Team to finalize – and then implement – this work plan. The Design Team includes members of the Interim Team and representatives from DCFS, Probation, CDC, DMH, the Commission for Children and Families, United Friends of the Children and Casey Family Programs.

The Design Team will act as a bridge between the Interim Team, major County departments involved with Emancipation Services and key community partners. The development of recommended changes to the ES/ILP program will be a fully collaborative effort with input from all stakeholders.

Other Key Activities

The ES/ILP work group created to develop the FY 2001-02 spending plan has drafted and distributed for final review the eligibility criteria for all ES/ILP budgeted programs (e.g., Education/Training Supports, Work-Related Expenses, Transportation Assistance/Driving Lessons, Computers and Training, Conferences, and Celebrations, etc.) These criteria will ensure the most equitable distribution of the available funding. The development of the criteria was done in collaboration with members of the Emancipation Oversight Committee.

Ms. Garcia has developed an initial draft of a communications plan for getting the word out to ES/ILP program participants, staff, attorneys and hearing officers regarding the eligibility criteria. She has also begun work on developing a comprehensive, youth-oriented ES/ILP program website. Planning meetings have been held with program staff to develop the information to be posted, with a Chief Information Office representative regarding implementation, and with a possible vendor.

Dr. Watson has completed a draft of the Transitional Housing section of the upcoming Citizens Economy & Efficiency Commission's report on the ES/ILP program. It reviews the County's six major housing programs and presents a snapshot of the current and planned transitional housing resources for pre-emancipated and emancipated foster youth, as well as youth of similar ages and circumstances, in Los Angeles County. The report shows how these resources are distributed across the County's eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs) and compares this distribution with that of the population of youth in out-of-home care. This information will enable the Interim Team's Housing Expert to make immediate progress in developing a housing plan that will guide future resource planning and in creating an operational database of all available housing.

Meetings have been held with CDC and with Lisa Nunez, the Resource Development Administrator, to summarize key report findings and to coordinate activities to further inventory and significantly increase housing resources for emancipated foster youth.

Dr. Watson has met with Walter Furman of UCLA regarding his reports on the County's ES/ILP program and his specific concerns regarding past data collection efforts and client tracking. He has agreed to assist the Interim Team in identifying the key data elements needed for youth/program purposes and for administrative/management purposes. Dr. Watson has also met with the Casey Family Programs on this subject. They are extremely interested in assisting the Team, particularly with respect to outcomes identification (they are leading a national-level project) and technology needs (e.g., youth "smart cards" that can trigger and track services). They are willing to finance some of the County's efforts in this arena.

A meeting to develop the ES/ILP FY 2002-03 Budget, as well as begin the development of a multi-sector, multi-year Budget, has been scheduled for January 14, 2002.

All the participating stakeholders recognize the high priority need to improve the delivery of services to emancipating youth. We are gratified at the level of cooperation and commitment that has been demonstrated as we work collaboratively to ensure that the County's program will meet the needs of youth emancipating from our care.

We will provide our next quarterly progress report to your Board by April 8, 2002.

Each Supervisor
January 10, 2002
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Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information, or your staff may contact Kathy House at (213) 974-1323.

DEJ:DL
SGW:SRK:tld

Attachment

- c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
- County Counsel
- Chief Probation Officer
- Director, Children and Family Services
- Director, Community and Senior Services
- Director, Consumer Affairs
- Acting Director, Health Services
- Director, Mental Health
- Interim Director, Public Social Services
- Executive Director, Community Development Commission

**INTERIM OPERATIONAL AGREEMENT FOR
LOS ANGELES COUNTY'S
EMANCIPATION SERVICES/
INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (ES/ILP)**

I. PURPOSE

This Interim Operational Agreement is entered into by the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) and the following County departments: Children and Family Services (DCFS), Probation (Probation), Community Development Commission (CDC), Public Social Services (DPSS), Mental Health (DMH), Community and Senior Services (CSS), Health Services (DHS), and Consumer Affairs.

The purpose of the Interim Operational Agreement is to confirm and define the departments joint and several roles and responsibilities with respect to the County's efforts to improve the ES/ILP Program. It is a Preliminary Agreement to be followed while the Interim Team recommended in Dr. Sharon Watson's report titled "Findings and Recommendations Regarding Los Angeles County's Emancipation Services and Independent Living Programs" is conducting its work. Dr. Watson's report provides a framework for this effort, as will the upcoming Citizens Economy and Efficiency Commission report on emancipation services. A follow-up Agreement will be enacted when the new ES/ILP operating structure is established and revised policies and procedures are developed.

Collectively, the named departments are responsible for:

- Providing a unified and comprehensive ES/ILP program for all eligible youth, ages 14 to 21, who are in or have been in the foster care system; and
- Ensuring that ES/ILP program planning, service delivery, staff training, budget development, data collection, and outcome evaluation efforts include input from all relevant County and non-County partners in their design and execution.

Preparing youth who have been in foster care for successful adulthood is a key responsibility of Los Angeles County government. These youth, who have been removed from their parents, families and their communities because of their parents' behavior or their own, are uniquely vulnerable. They have been characterized by the federal government as a "special needs" population because of their increased rates of homelessness, non-marital child bearing, poverty, and delinquent or criminal behavior

as well as their higher risk of being targets of crime and physical assault. Thus, these youth require an extraordinary effort on the part of public, private, and community agencies to properly prepare them for emancipation.

II. PROVISIONS

The term of this Operational Agreement shall begin on October 23, 2001, and shall expire upon enactment of the ongoing Operational Agreement to be developed by the Interim Team in collaboration with the affected departments no later than October 1, 2002. It may be amended from time to time by agreement of all the parties. If any party desires an amendment(s), they shall inform the other parties of their desire to modify the Interim Agreement in writing and shall specifically identify the term(s) or condition(s), which they desire to modify. In order for this document to remain viable, amendments, which include additions, modifications, and/or deletions discovered through experience, may be necessary.

III. BACKGROUND

As stated in Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 16501(c), Los Angeles County is required to provide child welfare services as needed. This includes preparation for independent living for youth who are in or have been in out-of-home care.

Provisions of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (FCIA) and the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CIP), as well as the State of California's elected options under these programs, shall be fully implemented.

- Eligible young people for CIP funds include those up to age 21:
 - Who are "likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age" under either the dependency or delinquency systems.
 - Who have aged out of foster care, without regard to their eligibility for Title IV-E funded foster care. A portion of funds must be used to serve eligible young people, ages 18 to 21, who leave foster care because they reach age 18.
- The Chafee Independence Program also requires that states make benefits and services available to Indian youth in the state on the same basis as other youth, again regardless of whether these young people were Title IV-E eligible while in foster care.

- Under the FCIA, there are two areas of service that are limited to young people, ages 18 to 21:

Housing: CIP dollars for room and board may only be provided to youth who have left foster care as a result of turning 18.

Medicaid: The FCIA option to extend Medicaid coverage to age 21 is intended solely for young people who have left foster care on or after their 18th birthday. The State of California has elected to adopt this option.

- All other independent living services envisioned under the Act, including life-skills training, case management support, and referral services may be made available to youth both before and after they turn 18.

FCIA funds provide an excellent vehicle to bring a broad range of available services and related dollars to the table, thereby leveraging existing options and opportunities for youth transitioning from care. These include the critically important areas of housing, employment, education, health and mental health services.

Finally, the Act requires that youth participate directly in designing their own program activities and encourages youth involvement in the development and implementation of the CIP and related initiatives.

IV. PROBLEM DEFINITION

Based on statistics provided by the Child Welfare League:

- 40-60% of young people experience homelessness within one year of leaving foster care;
- Only 40-50% of young people will have completed high school by the time they must become self-supporting;
- Less than half of these young people will have jobs upon leaving foster care; and
- Over 60% of young women leaving foster care will have a baby within four years.

To improve these current youth outcomes and ensure that Los Angeles County foster youth are appropriately prepared for adulthood, an integrated and comprehensive ES/ILP program must be created.

Although several successful program elements exist, and many foster youth have benefited greatly, there needs to be more unity, collaboration, and cohesiveness across the many departments and agencies involved to produce more satisfactory outcomes for our pre-emancipating and emancipated foster youth. There also need to be clear policies and procedures put in place, with accurate data collection, evaluation of program services and contracts, and outreach efforts that result in timely referrals and access to services.

V. SCOPE OF WORK

To quickly enable eligible youth to receive the full array of ES/ILP services they need and are entitled to, an Interim Team, headed by a Team Leader, will be assembled. This team will develop a Work Plan to: 1) put in place a series of program and service enhancements, 2) develop additional administrative/management elements, 3) refine existing policies and procedures, and 4) create an effective ES/ILP operating structure within DCFS, Probation, and other County departments, as needed. To accomplish this, the Interim Team will require the full support and involvement of the affected departments.

The Team Leader will oversee the development and implementation of the Work Plan and be responsible for communicating and securing any additional resources needed from the affected departments to meet the needs of program youth. In turn, the departments will be responsible for responding, implementing, and acting on recommendations and issues identified by the Team in a timely manner.

The work of the Team Leader will be overseen by the CAO, and the Team Leader will work in close collaboration with DCFS, Probation, other County departments and community partners.

VI. FISCAL PROCESS

The FY 2001-02 ES/ILP funds received from the Chafee Independence Program and the State of California ILP Program will continue to be budgeted in the DCFS Adopted Budget.

Costs and other available funding sources attributed to the ES/ILP program will continue to be budgeted in the respective departmental budgets.

All potential funding sources that may be available to eligible youth will be identified.

A broader budget spending plan, together with a service cost and needs analysis, and a revenue source analysis to include other federal funds (e.g., HUD grants and Section 8 housing subsidies/vouchers), private foundation grants, and other private and nonprofit sector support, will also be developed for FY 2002-03, as well as a multi-year (5 year) Budget Plan beginning in FY 2002-03. The Team Leader will take the lead in coordinating involvement with public and private stakeholders.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The implementation target dates for this Operational Agreement are as follows:

Executive Operational Agreement with Respective Departments	10/23/01
Establish Interim Team	11/09/01
Complete ES/ILP Program Work Plan	11/21/01
Complete Review of ES/ILP Program Staffing	11/15/01
Define Casework and ILP Coordinator and Community Worker Functions	12/01/01
Complete Plan for Alumni Center Network	12/15/01
Complete ES/ILP FY 2002-03 Budget Request	1/15/02
Issue revised ES/ILP policies and procedures	1/15/02
Develop Staff and Caregiver Training Program	3/01/02
Execute ongoing Operational Agreement	10/01/02
Establish New ES/ILP Program Operating Structure	10/01/02

VIII. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CAO

The CAO will ensure that the Interim Team Leader and Department Heads are held accountable for their roles and responsibilities as outlined in this Agreement. In this regard, the CAO is committed to use his existing authority to call upon County personnel for assistance in support of the ES/ILP program and to transfer resources to this program, as needed, to ensure its effective operation.

Interim Team Leader

The Interim Team Leader, whose work will be overseen by the CAO, and who will work in close collaboration with all involved County departments and community partners, is responsible for overseeing the ES/ILP program development process and for working with Department Heads to implement all adopted recommendations in order to ensure a smooth transition between the current and reconfigured programs.

The Interim Team Leader will direct the work of the Interim Team members. The Team will include representatives from DCFS and Probation, as well as the following members whose specific responsibilities are shown:

- A Housing Expert who will capitalize on the many emerging opportunities to expand the current array of transitional housing inventory and provide rent vouchers/subsidies to a much greater number of eligible youth, will oversee, review and assess the current HUD grant process, and who will coordinate current and future public/private transitional housing development activities.
- This Housing Expert will begin by addressing the various transitional housing components of the State AB 427 legislation, which is effective on January 01, 2002, and how AB 427 could be implemented in Los Angeles County to get the maximum benefit for our youth. This expert should also ensure that the Section 8 FAMILY-UP housing voucher program, applied for in August, gets properly implemented if the up-to-200 18-month vouchers applied for are awarded to the City and County of Los Angeles. A clear policy for prioritizing the allocation of these vouchers will be developed immediately following grant notification.
- A Program/Policy Development Expert who will coordinate development of revised policies and procedures, streamlined service delivery, an Alumni Center program network, and a mentoring program for these youth. This expert will begin by developing an improved, streamlined and faster system for referral, and for authorizing and issuing cash assistance to program youth.
- A Budget/Contract/Data/Evaluation Expert who will oversee long-range budget planning, development and monitoring of ES/ILP-related contracts, creation of a unified data collection system for all eligible youth (both Probation and DCFS) and the development of a program and outcome evaluation component for the program. This expert will begin by coordinating the development of a recommended budget for FY 2002-03, as well as development of a computer-based data collection system for tracking program youth.
- An Interagency/Multi-Sector Liaison Expert who will establish (and, in some cases, re-establish) solid, constructive, productive relationships with the many partners – both County and non-County – involved in the ES/ILP program. This expert will begin by engaging all Program partners in program decision-making and continuously informing them about resulting program changes. One planned method for improving communication of information is the creation of an ES/ILP program information website targeted for implementation as early as possible in 2002.
- An Executive Assistant who will support the work of the Interim Team.

The Interim Team will also be responsible for making recommendations regarding a new Emancipation Services (ES) operating structure, qualifications for the ES Chief and other key positions, and the number and types of positions needed to carry out the enhanced program.

Collective Departmental/Agency responsibilities are as follows:

- Share relevant ES/ILP program information and data in an inclusive and timely manner;
- Participate in the development and execution of program policies and procedures, service components, training modules, the proposed program information website and outcome evaluation efforts, and data collection;
- Participate in the development of the ES/ILP annual and multi-year budgets;
- Participate in ES/ILP resource development efforts and activities; and
- Participate in outreach activities for eligible youth.

Due to its unique knowledge related to available housing resources, CDC will:

- Work closely with the Interim Team Housing Expert in addressing the housing components of AB 427 and how they could be implemented in Los Angeles County;
- Work closely with the Interim Team Housing Expert to ensure that the Section 8 FAMILY-UP housing voucher program applied for in August is properly implemented when and if Los Angeles County is awarded these additional vouchers; and
- Develop, in partnership with the Interim Team, DCFS, Probation, DMH, HUD, private foundations, community organizations and others as appropriate, a comprehensive inventory of transitional housing for emancipated youth. Housing options should include a range of geographic locations, types of facilities, and unit sizes geared to the full continuum of youth needs.

INTERIM OPERATIONAL AGREEMENT

In witness thereof, we, the Heads of the respective Departments/Agencies below, do hereby agree to the terms of and cause the Interim Operational Agreement for Los Angeles County's Emancipation Services/Independent Living Program to be effective this October 23, 2001. This Operational Agreement provides the clarification of roles and responsibilities and confirms the commitment of all departments to deliver effective services to pre- and post emancipated youth, support each other in that service delivery and assist in the development of revised policies and procedures and a new operating structure for ES/ILP services.

DAVID E. JANSSEN
Chief Administrative Officer

ANITA BOCK, Director
Department of Children and
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FRED LEAF, Acting Director
Department of Health Services

RICHARD SHUMSKY
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CARLOS JACKSON, Executive Director
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Consumer Affairs